

The Ballarat Naturalist

May 2015



Wild Flowers of Western Australia

Presented by Neil Macumber

Neil Macumber manages Birdswing Birding and Wildlife Tours. His talk covered the flora and fauna seen on WA tours in the south west, and in north of Perth as far as Kalbarri.

His talk was well illustrated with photographs of the spectacular wildflowers found in the west and a variety of birds, mammals, reptiles and invertebrates which may be seen. He spoke about the success and failure he has had in growing many species in Victoria.

Tours begin in Kings Park that has views over Perth and the Swan River. The 750 year old Boab which was transplanted there from the Kimberley region in 2008 has settled into its new environment.



In the Stirling Ranges the growth form of *Kingia australis* resembles that of Grass Trees but they are only distantly related. Growing on different peaks of the Ranges are different species of Darwinias, a small shrub.

North of Perth, Wreath Flower *Lechenaultia macrantha* puts on a colourful display on the gravel edges of roads. Plants grow up to 1.5m in diameter with pink and white flowers around their edges.

Photo: In the Stirling Ranges the growth form of *Kingia australis* distantly related to Grass Tree



Photo: North of Perth, Wreath Flower *Lechenaultia macrantha*

Neil discussed the work of Don and Joy Williams. They have left a large area on their Hi-Vallee Farm near Eneabba uncleared to preserve an interesting area of biodiversity.

He also mentioned that many of the WA peas contain a highly toxic chemical (fluoro-acetate, or the poison '1080'). Native mammals are largely resistant to these toxins but grazing stock are often poisoned.

Neil was thanked for his wide ranging talk by Fran Hanrahan.

John Gregurke

News of our travellers by Alison Williams

Peter and Claire Dalman visited us and I took them on a trip to Arger Fen, a piece of woodland quite near here, owned by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The bluebells had only just started, so they weren't quite at their full glory, but there had been a few warm days last week which had brought them on a lot.



Photo: Bluebells in Arger Fen, managed by Suffolk National Trust; UK (Need to see it via email to appreciate the blue colour. Ed.)

Helen Burgess is not renewing her membership of FNCB. The club is grateful to Helen for her contribution to the club over many years. Some years ago the club awarded her a medal for her services. Helen is now residing in Kelaston, Lake St, Wendouree and is pleased to have visitors

La Gerche Trail Working Bee

Leader: John Petheram

Eleven members joined John in the next stage of trail planning. The morning began with a “classroom” session in the Forestry School at Creswick utilising the projection facilities so that we could all see and discuss the texts proposed for the new signage, and compare them with the old signs. The original signs are in some instances inaccurate, have faded or are gone missing. Factual errors were corrected, typographic errors dealt with and elements of grammar improved. Suggestions were made as to what and how much information should be included on the signs, and which should be put on the associated website. A sample of the signage material, black etched on aluminium, was shown to us. We are required to work in with Parks Victoria regarding materials and businesses which will produce the signs.



Photo: A view of part of the Trail



Photo: John Petheram discussing points with Les H and Emily N

We adjourned for lunch in the picnic area of what is now Parks Victoria regional offices. Then members walked the 2.2km circuit. John had prepared a list of La Gerche’s planted trees which would be worthy of having species labels attached. We needed to find them again and select specimens located close to the Trail. Such individuals trees now have pink ribbon tied to them and labelled to



Photo: John Petheran making a note for future signpost

match John's list. Locations for the new informative signs were discussed, including the need to tie in their descriptions with the present-day vegetation growth, or to do some "gardening" so that important species are readily visible. Some extra species were discovered, and amendments made to the list.

It was an intensive day's work, finishing round 4.30pm but considerable progress has been made and John was grateful for all the discussions which took place, saying:

I loved the way people volunteered their views and ideas (so freely), and the exercise was extremely helpful in advancing the process. What a range of talent we have in the group! It may still look a mess, but I can assure you I can now see some light at the end (we have 6 months fortunately).

Carol Hall.

Excursion in May

Please note: the Mt Cole excursion in on **Saturday, 2 May** as in 2015-16 Syllabus, **not Sunday, 3 May** as advertised in the back page of April 's newsletter.

Excerpts of FNCB Meeting Minutes April 7, 2015

Opening and Apologies

Peter Dalman, welcomed 30 members and visitors.

Apologies: Genny Binns, Bill Murphy, Val Hocking, Peter Noble

Business Arising from Previous Meeting:

John G. and Emily N. completed a submission on behalf of the Club regarding Victoria's Bushfire Fuel Management Approach and sent it to the Inspector General for Emergency Management.

Correspondence:

IN (since last Club Meeting on Mar 6th, 2015):

From Environment Victoria: email asking us to remind our State politicians of their election promises re. climate change and environmental management; email asking us to contact the Federal Government about reducing/ abolishing fossil fuel subsidies to big polluters; From Victorian National Parks Association: letter detailing State Government moves to ban cattle grazing in Alpine & Red Gum National Parks, and the need to continue lobbying to secure protection for reserves known as the Murray River Park; e-magazine "Park Watch".

From Dept. of Environment, Land, Water & Planning: letter informing us of State Govt plans to establish a new park comprising the Canadian State Forest & adjoining former plantation land, and an invitation to Club members to provide feedback on how the park could be used: online at www.delwp.vic.gov.au/canadian-park. Deadline for submissions is 30th April, 2015.

OUT To Club Members: invitation to "Biodiversity Across the Borders" Conference (plus Registration Form & full program).

Business Arising from Correspondence:

Susan Kruss, Federation Univ. Masters student requested information on the history and establishment of FNCB for her thesis. She secured relevant members' contact details after the meeting.

Anyone with information about present locations of *Banksia marginata*, *Bursaria spinosa* and/or *Allocasuarina verticillata* is requested to contact Emily with details to be passed on to the "Bring Back the Banksias and Save the Sheokes" working group. Peter Muller to

email info. about several populations of Sweet Bursaria and Silver Banksia.

Reports:

Treasurer's Report: Opening balance \$14,290.80 Income \$635 Expenses \$139.18 Closing balance: \$14,786.62

Friends of Canadian Corridor Meeting: Attended by John G. There is to be a short period for community engagement (with an article about Park plans on our website containing a link to a survey on park use/priorities), a few issues to be decided and the aim to decide upon the type of park and proclaim it as a Park by the end of the year, after which a Management Plan will be developed.

Bring Back the Banksias and Save the Sheokes: Emily N. attended this workshop along with 37 others including land-holders in the Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP) region, students and lecturers at Latrobe, staff from the Arthur Rylah Institute, Australian Native Plant Conservancy, Glenelg-Hopkins and Corangamite CMAs, DELWP, Ballarat Region Seedbank and other local nursery managers and land management consultants. Aim is to replenish the severely depleted numbers of ecological keystone species *Banksia marginata*, *Allocasuarina verticillata* and *Bursaria spinosa* in suitable habitat across VVP. Described how the project came about, current, ongoing genetic studies underway on Banksia, original likely distribution & current distribution of the 3 focus species, threats, challenges and opportunities with regard to those populations, gaps in knowledge, gathered data from attendees on all populations they knew of, and brainstormed governance and community engagement aspects, and protocols for seed collection and propagation.

La Gerche Trail project status: Aim to discuss/finalise sign requirements and wording at Club field trip on Saturday April 11 to provide to Parks Vic and sign writers for quotes. Quite a few members hoping to attend the field trip to provide input into the project.

General Business

SEANA Autumn Camp debrief: at least eight thankyou letters and three times the normal traffic on website.

Our SEANA Camp Report can be found in Ballarat Naturalist & soon on the Club's website.

The Committee agreed to purchase 30 Lichen Identification brochures from Ken Harris (Friends of Morwell NP) to minimise postage costs and make them available for members to purchase for \$3.00.

Western Highway duplication: Wayne McG. & Neil Macumber reported that they had learned that the Western Highway duplication was likely to cut through part of Mt Langi Ghiran Park. Protest post-cards were available to send to the local Minister.

Helen Burgess, one of the Club's longest standing members, is not going to continue her membership but would like to continue receiving the Club newsletter. Members agreed that the Club would cover the cost of postage for as long as she would like to receive the newsletter.

Show and Tell

Paul N. told us of the four chicks raised by Nankeen Kestrels at his place in Mt Egerton this summer, and of three Wedge-tailed Eagles that removed 2 Ring-tail Possums from their drey.

John Mildren was thrilled to get a close look at a Nankeen Night-heron with breeding plumage at Fairy Land, Lake Wendouree.

John G. reported a Collared Sparrowhawk that spent 2 hours eating a Spotted Dove in his front yard at Wendouree.

Wayne McG. spotted 100 Grey Teal south of Cardigan Village.

Mike S. brought along a dead, young Collared Sparrowhawk found at Brawn Avenue Lake, Wendouree. Martin Scuffins thought it a casualty of cold, wet weather and poor hunting skills because it didn't have much condition on it.

Andy A. saw six Pink-eared Ducks feeding near the edge of the water at Bullarto Reservoir, and a Red-bellied Black Snake curled up and well-camouflaged in the black charcoal in a fire pit at the picnic area at Lyonville Mineral Springs.

Les H. reported seeing an all-white Grey Goshawk hunting over paddocks in Bungaree.

Emily N. happily reports a good flowering season for Sharp Midge-orchids, Bearded Midge-orchids, Parsons Bands and Red-tip Tiny Greenhoods in Enfield State Forest. They are all going strong with new plants still appearing and budding whilst many are pollinated after flowering over a month ago.

CALENDAR 2015-16

May

- Fri 1 *Mongolia* - Val Hocking & *Cape York* - John Gregurke
 Sat 3 Excursion: *Mt Cole* - John Gregurke
 Tues 26 Committee meeting at Val's

June

- Fri 5 *Conservation & farming* - Neville Oddie, farmer and
 Conservationist, Chepstowe
 Sun 7 Excursion: *Fungi (Venue TBA)* - Les Hanrahan, Club mem
 ber

Committee

President	Peter Dalman
Vice –Pres	Fran Hanrahan
Secretary	Emily Noble
Treasurer	Les Hanrahan

Claire Dalman
 John Gregurke
 Wayne McGuire

Val Hocking
 John Mildren

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Meetings are held at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr of Gillies and Gregory Sts, on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm..

Excursions: Leave from the carpark at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts. at 9.30 am, unless otherwise advised.

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